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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *October* the 11th, 1753.

AS the writers of the two following letters are of a ſex for which I have the ſincereſt regard and veneration, I have made no delay in committing them to the preſs; not doubting that the evils they complain of will excite the attention of my readers.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

I AM a very hearty old maid of ſeventy-three; but I have a parcel of impertinent nephews and neices, who, becauſe I have kept my good-humour, will needs have it that I have parted with ſomething elſe. Pray, Mr. Fitz-Adam,

Fitz-Adam, be ſo kind as to tell theſe graceleſs relations of mine, that it is not impoſſible for a woman to have two virtues at a time; and that ſhe may be merry and CHASTE, as well as merry and WISE. But as I am always to be teazed upon this ſubject, I have ſome thoughts of renouncing my virginity, to ſecure my good-humour; for I am afraid that by contending with them every day for what they ſay I have loſt, I ſhall run the hazard of loſing in reality what they allow me to poſſeſs. I beg your advice in this critical affair, and am,

SIR,

Your moſt humble ſervant,

PRUDENTIA HOLDFAST.

IN anſwer to Miſs Holdfaſt, I ſhall only ſay, that if I was to be teazed out of my virginity, it ſhould be by the moſt impudent fellow living, ſooner than by theſe undutiful relations.

MR. FITZ-ADAM,

I AM a young woman of faſhion, and a great admirer of a town life. But it hath been my misfortune, for theſe three months paſt, to be condemned to the odious country, and the more odious diverſions of it. And this in compliance to an old-faſhioned aunt, who, excepting her two daughters, and the company they keep, is the moſt odious thing of all. But it is not for the ſake of abuſing my friends, or of ridiculing the country, that I trouble you with this letter; I have really eſcaped ſuch dangers in this retirement, that I mean it as a caution to my ſex againſt giving up the innocent amuſements of a town life, for the deſtructive pleaſures of woods and ſhades.

I HAD hardly been a week at my aunt's, before I loſt all the delicacy of quality; and from the paleſt com-

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plexion in the world, and no appetite (the beſt proofs of high birth, and of keeping good company) I began to look as roſy as a milkmaid, and to eat like a ploughboy. I ſhall never forget the awkward compliments that were made me upon theſe defects; but a new mortification ſucceeded, which removed me ſtill farther from upper life, and had like to have killed me. I began abſolutely, Mr. Fitz-Adam, to grow fat. What was to be done now? Why, I muſt walk forſooth! I wondered they did not bid me fly; for to a woman of condition, who had never ſtirred out of doors but in her chair, flying ſeemed as eaſy as walking. But my diſeaſe was deſperate, and ſo muſt be my cure: in ſhort, they taught me how to walk, and in leſs than a week I verily believe I had travelled a mile.

And now I was teazed upon another account. My couſins, who were grown quite intimate with me, and who were what they call neat girls, were perpetually finding fault with the looſeneſs of my morning dreſs. I really pitied their ignorance, but could hardly forbear laughing when I ſaw them come down as prim to breakfaſt, as if they were dreſſed for viſitors. It was in vain for me to tell them that women of faſhion were above ſuch regards; I was again forced to comply, and to ſtick pins in my clothes, as if dreſſing for a drum.

I am far from denying that air, exerciſe and neatneſs contributed to my health; but I remember with confuſion the alteration they produced. I had lived in the polite circle to the age of five-and-twenty without conceiving an idea of the other ſex, any farther than what related to their uſe in public places, a treat upon the water, or a party at Brag. Indeed the perpetual hurry of a town life puts all other things quite out of one's

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head. But idleneſs is the root of all evil. In leſs than a fortnight my heart told me that I had paſſions as well as appetites. To deal plainly with you, Mr. Fitz-Adam, for want of ſomething to do, I fell deſperately in love. With ſhame I confeſs it, I was caught I know not how: for my ruſtic, though he paid me particular regards, and was a handſome fellow with a good eſtate, had no one accompliſhment upon earth to recommend him to a woman of faſhion. His education had been at the univerſity, where he had purſued nothing but his ſtudies. He knew nobody in town but people whom nobody knows; had been at court but once; deteſted play, and had no ideas of routs and drums. His virtues (for my aunt and couſins were continually talking of them) reached no farther than a little charity to the poor; a vaſt deal of what they call good-nature; abundance of duty to the old lady his mother, and a ridiculous fondneſs for a ſiſter, who was one of the plaineſt women I ever ſaw. But in affairs of gallantry, or the faſhions of the town, he was as ignorant as a Hottentot. He would ſometimes, indeed, make a party with us at Whiſt for half-crowns, which he called deep play; but as to ſhuffling, fuzzing, changing of ſeats, hints to a partner, ſetting up honours without holding them, and the like, which are the eſſentials of the game, he was an abſolute ideot. He conſidered cards, he ſaid, only as an amuſement, and was perfectly indifferent whether he won or loſt. Yet in ſpite of myſelf, and ſo contemptible an animal, I was really in love with him. Nay, ſo entirely did he poſſeſs me, that I contrived to be ill, and to keep my chamber three mornings together, to engage him alone. But would you think it, Mr. Fitz-Adam? if he approached only to touch my hand, I had ſuch

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frights and fears about me, that I hardly knew where I was. I trembled at every word he ſpoke to me; and had he offered at thoſe trifling liberties, which every fine gentleman is admitted to in town, and which the ſtricteſt modeſty would only cry piſh at, I verily believe I ſhould have died. But his country education was the ſaving of my life. His intentions, I perceived, were to make a wife of me; a character, which of all characters in the world I had the greateſt averſion to; as, in all probability, it would connect me with the cares of a mother, and a thouſand ridiculous duties and affections, that a well-bred woman has really no time for. Yet this deplorable creature I had certainly been, if he had not all of a ſudden (for what reaſon I know not, unleſs he thinks it a crime for a lady to be a little witty upon the bible) taken a crotchet into his head of treating me like a ſtranger. The man is moſt evidently mad; for inſtead of directing all his diſcourſe to me as uſual, he is forever caballing with my youngeſt couſin, and talking by the hour in praiſe of a country education.

BUT, thanks to my ſtars, there is a place called London; where in a very few weeks, the buſineſs of play, and the amuſements of polite life ſhall cure me of my folly, and reſtore me to my complexion. I ſhall fly to the Brag-table as to an aſylum againſt the paſſions. It is there that love is never thought of. The men have no deſigns, nor the women temptations. It puts me in mind of the ſtate of innocence which our firſt parents fell from: the ſexes may meet naked, and not be aſhamed, nor even know that they are naked.

IT would take up too much of your paper to enforce the advantages of PLAY, by laying before you the evils it prevents. Scandal was never heard of at a card-table.